DETAILED ACTION

Remarks

1. A telephonic interview was held between Examiner and Mr. Mike King on January 09, 2009. A summary of the interview has been included with this paper.

2. Upon review of the rejection of claim 19 in the Office Action dated December 11, 2008, Examiner has found the claim to be allowable. Previously, examiner did not interpret the “means for reducing …” as a means-plus-function type limitation. According to the specification, "means for reducing an amount of stain in solution” includes providing a gasket with a thickness that is "as thin as possible without creating plugging problems in the channel" (pg. 6, l. 35-37). Furthermore, a feedback control of pump 22 keeps background fluorescence at a low level, by adding bleach in an amount such that “the stain in solution reacts with the bleach much faster than the reaction of the bleach with the stain bound to the fiber" (pg. 7, l. 5-10, l. 15-16). Because the prior art do not teach or fairly suggest the aforementioned features, Examiner has withdrawn the rejection of claim 19, and all claims depending from it.

Allowable Subject Matter

3. The following is an examiner’s statement of reasons for allowance: Claim 19 is allowed because the prior art made of record does not teach nor fairly suggest the means for reducing amount of stain in solution, as detailed above. Furthermore, the prior art does not teach a system such that a (single) mirror is able to both reflect filtered light toward the pulp fiber sample in a flow cell and to enable fluorescence from the pulp

fiber sample in the flow cell to pass through the mirror before reaching a detector logically coupled to a fluorescence analyzer (claims 20 and 50). The cited prior art teaches a first dichroic mirror that directs light toward a sample, and a second dichroic mirror that directs light from the sample toward a detector, but the prior art does not teach or fairly suggest an embodiment wherein “no additional optical element is disposed between the first and second dichroic mirrors" (claim 23). Furthermore, the prior art made of record does not specifically teach or fairly suggest a means for analyzing fluorescence capable of functioning according to the algorithm laid out in claim 44, nor does the prior art teach a means to analyze fluorescence emitted from a pulp fiber sample to determine (specifically) a fiber geometry, total charge, and lignin content of said fiber sample as in claim 46, to apply a correction to data provided by a second detector (claim 51), or to extract a particle fluorescence ratio from data (claim 52). Claims 58 and 59 recite the apparatus of the instant invention comprising means for controlling an amount of stain in solution having configurations not taught in the prior art of record.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled “Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance.”

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Cedric Chan whose telephone number is (571) 270-3721. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jill Warden can be reached on (571) 272-1267. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/C. C./
Examiner, Art Unit 1797

/Jill Warden/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1797